

Michiana's Rainbow Gazette

Serving The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Straight Community of the Greater Michiana
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Few Police Agencies Give Hate Crime Data AP 1/13/2001

Nearly 40 hate crimes were committed in Indiana last year, according to the state's first compilation of bias-motivated crimes.

However, only about 10 percent of the law enforcement agencies in the state provided data for the report, which was designed last year by the General Assembly and released [January 12th] by the Indiana State Police.

The lack of participation makes it difficult to draw any conclusions, said Maj. Karen Butt, commander of the Records Division.

"I think next year, once we have more compliance, we will be able to see if patterns are forming or if it's random, and get a lot of beneficial information out of it," she said.

The report shows that 38 crimes ranging from vandalism to murder were committed in 2000 against people because of their race or sexual orientation.

It contains no specific information about any of the incidents.

The report will be distributed to the state's Civil Rights Commission, the Legislative Council and all law enforcement agencies statewide.

A law that took effect July 1 requires law enforcement agencies to submit reports twice a year on the number and types of crimes committed because of a person's race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. The state police then must compile that information in an annual report.

The law, however, sets no deadline for filing local reports and no penalty for failing to comply.

"We could reiterate the law better," said state Rep. Gregory Porter, D-Indianapolis, a sponsor of the legislation. "We need to find a better way of education the police agencies on tracking or reporting the incidents."

Some police agencies have said they don't keep statistics on bias-based crimes, so they can't submit any for the report.

What Makes A Hate Crime A 'Hate Crime' Glenn James

Police agencies through out the state of Indiana use guidelines that have been established by the US Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to report hate crimes. These guidelines are complex with many factors that must be in place before a crime is classified as a "hate crime."

For instant, if a person was robbed at gun point near or in an area well know as a gay hang out but no evidence was found to determine if the crime was targeted at that person because of sexual orientation, the crime would not be considered a hate crime; however, if the perpetrator had used offensive epithets, such as, "I'm going to kill you, fag," then the case would be classified as a hate crime regardless if that person knew the victim sexual orientation. Offensive epithets do not necessarily need to be present especially if similar crimes had occurred at the same location over a period of time which would indicate that gays are being directly targeted.

The situation would also be the same for racially motivate crimes as well as crimes target toward religion, gender, national origin, and disability.

But are these guidelines being utilized? Some police agencies in Indiana have stated that they do not or cannot participate with the hate crimes data collection program because of various reasons; however, there are some police agencies who do participate but fail to report all hate crimes committed against the glbt community.

Maj. Karen Butt, commander of the Records Division of the Indiana State Police, stated the Mishawaka Police Department (MPD) has reported only one racially motivated hate crime for the year 2000. Div. of Records Chief Ken Wikowski of the MPD has stated the Mishawaka report for the year 2000 has not yet been completed and it does not contain any hate crimes committed against the GLBT community. The Mishawaka PD will be reporting five hate crimes for the year 2000 all of which involve racially motivated crimes.

While the MPD has been receiving reports of hate crimes committed against the glbt community

(Continued on page 3) Hate Crimes



Local Buzz

Lesbian/Gay Leaders Meet With Royal Oak Police *Triangle Foundation*

Treatment of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (glbt) people living in and patronizing Royal Oak, and other issues of concern were the topics of a recent meeting of leaders of several area glbt organizations and the new police chief in Royal Oak MI [Jan. 22]. The meeting was organized by the Triangle Foundation as an opportunity for the groups and the chief to get acquainted, and was an excellent chance for the glbt leaders to voice concerns about police relations, procedures, and policies.

Chief Theodore Quisenberry sat down with Rick Wallace, representing Royal Oak Association for Rights (ROAR); David Light of Main Street Pride; Leslie Thompson, Royal Oak resident and Executive Director of Affirmations; Jeffrey Montgomery, Executive Director of Triangle Foundation; and Sean Kosofsky, Director of Policy and Victim Services, Triangle Foundation.

"We found Chief Quisenberry to be very open to our concerns," said Rick Wallace. "He obviously comes from a law enforcement background that has valued diversity in communities. I think he 'gets it.'"

Leslie Thompson, who has served on the Citizens Police Review Board in Royal Oak, said, "The Chief made his commitment to equal treatment of all citizens very clear. I was very pleased to come away

with the feeling that his commitment to fair treatment for everyone is not just an expectation of all police personnel, but that he will act to insure that his department policies will also protect against sexual orientation discrimination."

"The Chief was very concerned about some of things that have happened to residents in Royal Oak," said David Light. "GLBT residents should expect a new level of attention when anti-gay bias is the motivation behind attacks or property damage."

"With so much attention to Royal Oak, brought on by recent anti-gay political activity in the City, it's good to know that the Police Department is in the hands of Chief Quisenberry," said Sean Kosofsky. "I think we all came away with every reason to believe that this is a man we can work with, because he wants to work with us."

Chief Quisenberry said of the session: "The Police Department is committed to providing an exceptional service with the sensitivity required in today's society. I think it is very important that all citizens, regardless of our differences, receive the highest degree of public service available, are treated with dignity and respect, and will come to associate the City of Royal Oak with standards such as these."

Gay Student Fears Prejudice At School *By Anna Troppens - Triangle Foundation*

A South Lyon mother fears for her son, Tyler Williams. "Will he be hurt because he is gay?", she asks. Ms. Williams concern peaked this week after South Lyon High School students allegedly threatened violence against her son who is also a student. The alleged threats came after the school's newspaper, the LIONS ROAR, published a story Jan 11 addressing prejudice against homosexuals. Tyler was interviewed anonymously using a fictitious name (Damon); however, other students apparently guessed Tyler's identity. And the harassment that has followed has the family worried.

The article discusses how other students harass Tyler because he is gay, calling him obscene and cruel names in the halls. His mother said Tyler Williams of Lyon Township is "pretty open" about his sexuality and has been called names before. However, "...it's the first time anything like this has happened. Kids were called into the office. As far as I know, that's all." Meanwhile, Ms. Williams fears for her son's safety.

"I'm very upset about it," she said. "There's been all this talk (in national news reports about hate crimes. It scares me." Tyler Williams said he has been openly gay for two years. He had trouble from his peers at school during those two years, but those problems

have escalated to threats of violence after the article in the Lions Roar. "The article caused more people to know", Williams said. Walking through the halls at school, he hears people talking about him. His friends tell him things they hear. But he still doesn't know the names of the people allegedly threatening him.

Worried, Williams has talked with school administrators and told them about the rumors. But school officials couldn't do anything, Williams said, because they didn't know the names of the people allegedly making threats. "It seems like a real serious thing", he said. "I think it's a big possibility that they could do something... that they'd want to, just to show that they could." Principal Larry Jackson was unaware of the situation. When children bully or harass each other, administrators discipline them, he said. "We don't permit kids to pick on other kids." Assistant Principal Linda Chudy-Bowman declined comment for publication.

"It's caused quite a bit of an uproar", said Junior Josh Rhoad, co-editor-in-chief of the Lions Roar. "We didn't post any name, but most of them (the other students) guessed. "I think there have been some cases that kids have yelled at him, (expletive) or whatever," he said.

(Continued on page 3) Student

Queer As "Zeds"

In the early days of the English language, before the modern standardization of spelling, the letter zed or 'z' was never used alone, it was always used as a double. When Miriam Webster created his American English dictionary, with the purpose of standardizing spelling, he tried to make the 'z' single in every instance that he felt it was appropriate because "I feel the double zed is a bit queer." For this reason, I chose the queer spelling of Gazette.

Paul McGraw

Former Editor & Co-Founder of Michiana's Rainbow Gazette

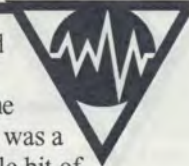
Due to change in Barnes & Noble policy, Michiana's Rainbow Gazette will no longer be available at Barnes & Noble Bookstore effective February 2001. If you are interested in receiving Michiana's Rainbow Gazette via mail please refer to the back of this publication.

Student (Continued from page 2)

The idea for the story quoting "Damon" arose from an editorial a girl wrote in a prior issue of the student newspaper. The girl didn't like how people call things "gay" if they don't like them. She believes that shows prejudice against homosexuals. Many people said the girl's ideas were stupid, Rhoad said. So the newspaper staff wrote a story on the issue and interviewed Tyler.

"It (the article) shows that there's differences, and people are still

looking at differences rather than the person," Rhoad explained. "Whether they agree with it or not, they shouldn't be a jerk or yell at him. "I don't think it (the article) was a mistake at all", Rhoad said. "I think it was a good story. All good articles are going to cause a little bit of an uproar. It got to people."



Hate Crimes (Continued from page 1)

since Truman's had opened ten years ago, no report has been filed to the US Department of Justice or the FBI. Last year, between July and December, at least five hate crimes committed against gblt persons has been reported to the MPD. Crimes reported range from intimidation and simple assault to vandalism and aggravated assault. All have occurred to patrons or employees of Truman's in the vicinity of the bar.

Chief Wikowski stated that the MPD does not have enough evidence to classify these crimes as hate crimes because graffiti of offensive epithets was not found at the scene, or the crimes could have stemmed from a disagreement between couples or a disgruntled patron.

So, what can we do as a community to make sure all hate crimes are reported? If a hate crime is committed against you report it to the

police immediately. Always get the name of the officer taking the report. Try to give as much detail as possible. Report any offensive language used such as 'fag' 'dyke' etc. Tell the officer you *need* a copy of the report (you might have to go to the police department to get it). Send a copy to Justice, Inc. (IN) or Triangle Foundation (MI). These agencies are collecting reports of hate crimes which they will later use to compare to the state wide report at the end of the year. Also, send a copy to the Indiana Justice Department.

Even if you are intimidated, you should report it to the police. But be cautious, intimidation is defined as "to place another person in **reasonable fear of bodily harm** through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack."

GLBT Speak Out! Joins Forces With MRG

Michiana's Rainbow Gazette would like to give a big warm welcome to Planned Parenthood's *GLBT Speak Out!*, our newest partner. *GLBT Speak Out!* is a newsletter started about 2 years ago to address the needs of GLBT health issues such as HIV, STD, pregnancy and prenatal care, parenting, and health care rights. They will continue this tradition through *Michiana's Rainbow Gazette*.

If you are interested in finding out more information about Planned Parenthood call (219) 237-6644 or visit them on the web at www.pph.org.

(Note: If you are on *GLBT Speak Out!* mailing list and on one of our mailing list, please let us know so we are not doubling subscription mailers. Thank you.)

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Local Buzz

Valentine Day Dance

Southside Christian Church will be holding its' third annual Valentine Day Dance February 9th at Southside Christian Church on E. Jackson Road in South Bend. Raffles, door prizes, contest (including the third annual King & Queen Contest) and hors d'oeuvre will accompany the dance. Entertainment will be provided by Janet of Backstage Productions.

Ticket cost is \$10 per person at the door, and one half of all profits will be divided between Justice, Inc. and Michiana Pride Coalition. Doors open at 8 pm and will continue to 12 am.

Southside Christian Church is located at 1329 E. Jackson Road, south of Scottsdale Mall near the St. Joseph County 4-H Fair. For more detailed directions call (219) 291-1156.

Federal Lawsuit Filed Against Chicago Police In Alleged Antigay Attack

1/13/01 © 2001 The Advocate

A heterosexual man who said he was beaten by off-duty Chicago police officers after he embraced a friend outside a bar filed a federal lawsuit [January 11] asking for \$3 million in damages, the *Chicago Tribune* reports. Tim Cavenagh, an attorney for the alleged victim, Jeffery Lyons, said one officer yelled, "Get that faggot shit away from my truck," before that officer and others began beating and kicking Lyons. Three of the officers were placed on desk duty in November in connection with the alleged attack, but they were placed back on the street when Lyons could not identify them in a line-up. The suit names those three officers as well as other unknown officers.

Survey of Teens Finds Mix of Tolerance

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A survey of teens polled in the 2000 "Who's Who Among American High School Students" has found that a significant number admit to being biased against gays but that a majority support gay marriage. The survey of 2,804 participants, age 16 to 18 and with an A or B grade average, found that 40% admit to being prejudiced against gays and lesbians, a higher percentage than admit to bias against any racial, ethnic, or religious group. However, 54% of the teens favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry, and 78% believe gays should be allowed to serve openly in the military. Nearly three out of four of the teens believe that gays should be allowed to teach in school, and 62% believe that gays or lesbians are acceptable as Boy Scout or Girl Scout leaders.

Toronto Pride Weekend Give Away - To Benefit Triangle Foundation

I have raffle tickets available for the TRIANGLE FOUNDATION raffle trip for 2 to TORONTO PRIDE WEEKEND, June 22 to 24, 2001. Includes hotel accommodations and rail transportation from Windsor.

Raffle is a benefit for the TRIANGLE FOUNDATION. Tickets are \$5.00 each.

Transportation and Accommodations donated by TRAVEL YOUR WAY, of Troy, Michigan, (248) 879-6800.

Drawing well be held on May 6, 2001 at the Triangle Foundation's 7th annual Museum Dinner. You need not be present to win. For information call (313) 537-3323. - Sean K.

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No Cover!

Planned Parenthood, a friend of women's rights, is under attack

By Becca Rothschild 1/23/01 © 2001 Detroit Free Press (Received From PPH Southeast MI)

"Organizations that promote abortions are organizations I don't want to support ...with taxpayer money."

WITH THAT statement to the New York Times a week before his inauguration, President George W. Bush took the war on women's rights up a notch.

Bush was talking about clamping down on the free speech of family planning agencies abroad by withholding U.S. funds from any group that tries to keep abortion safe and legal, but his words suggest he may try to go further.

That would indicate more storms brewing for Planned Parenthood, the nation's oldest and largest family planning agency, which is often unfairly targeted in the abortion debate.

People who oppose a woman's right to choose are usually against more than just abortion. Many are against family planning, against giving women knowledge to control their own bodies and make their own decisions. And they consider anyone who even talks about freedom of choice as an abortion promoter and advocate, even though most of us who support the right to choose could never exercise the option ourselves. We just don't want anyone making the decision for us and don't feel comfortable making it for anyone else.

Yes, abortion is one of the options that Planned Parenthood counselors discuss with women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant, but the organization is more about helping to illuminate the consequences of behavior so girls and women can make better choices about getting pregnant in the first place. About 90 percent of the activity of Planned Parenthood's southeast Michigan chapter is in prevention, education, counseling and prenatal care.

Abstinence is a key part of the conversation. So is adoption. So are discussions of the impact that an abortion -- or even having to think about one -- can have on a woman's physical and emotional well-being.

"It's about being healthy, knowledgeable, making good decisions," said Sandra Reese, chairperson of the board of directors of Planned Parenthood of Southeast Michigan.

It's about letting women take control.

"We don't tell women what to decide, we just give them the information to make their own decisions," said board member Bill Rands. "That's the biggest power of all."

Some people still resist letting women have that kind of power, especially poor women, who have the least access to birth control and can benefit most from it. Countless studies show that the more educated a woman is, the fewer children she is likely to have, and the healthier and better off they will all be. Logic dictates that the better a woman controls when she gets pregnant, the less likely she is to have an abortion.

But for those who aren't interested in everyone enjoying the same rights and standards of living, it's apparently better for poor people to have more children and remain mired in poverty.

"It's a social/class sort of thing," Reese said. "It ensures that castes and classes remain."

That's why trotting out and perverting ancient history about Margaret Sanger is so hateful. Anti-choice propaganda argues that Sanger founded Planned Parenthood to further a eugenic desire to eliminate the black race. Web sites twist Sanger's words and associations to link her to Nazism. Letter writers ask Jacqueline Morrison, president and CEO of the local Planned Parenthood, how a woman of color like her can possibly run an organization that seeks to stop black women from procreating.

Although even the Margaret Sanger Papers Project at New York

University acknowledges that she "naively or carelessly" adopted too much of the eugenics' movement's rhetoric, she did not adopt its motives. Nazism and eugenics attempt to suppress choice and freedom. Sanger, who admittedly wanted to make society more fit, sought fundamentally to give women greater strength and control, so that when they chose to have children, both mother and child would be healthy. Sanger did not target blacks for sterilization. She began giving women in her own community power over their bodies, and moved into Harlem after black leaders invited her to offer women there the same services available to folks uptown.

The eugenics argument is particularly effective when directed toward well-intentioned lawmakers who may be on the fence about anti-family planning legislation. If they hear enough of the rhetoric and know too little about how Planned Parenthood works, they might be willing to believe it's not an agent of choice and control, but one with a dangerous agenda.

That logic completely distorts reality. Even if what they claim about Sanger were true, it has little to do with the good work Planned Parenthood does today to educate women, particularly young women. The war against choice isn't simply about stopping "baby killing," as anti-abortion advocates would like you to believe. It's a war against women's civil rights. Planned Parenthood is an easy target. And no ammunition is considered too dirty.



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Lynne Cheney refuses to talk about Mary or lesbian plot in novel

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In an interview with *The New York Times* about her role as the vice president's wife, Lynne Cheney refused to talk about her openly lesbian daughter, Mary. "I can't think of anything worse if you were a young woman," Lynne Cheney said, "than having your mother talk about your personal life." Cheney also said that she has no idea why she included a lesbian subplot in a 1981 novel she wrote titled *Sisters*.

"I'm not going to analyze a novel I wrote a long time ago," she told the paper. "I don't remember the plot." The novel includes a love letter from one woman to another that reads, "Let us go away

together, away from the anger and imperatives of men. There will be only the two of us, and we shall linger through long afternoons of sweet retirement. In the evenings I shall read to you while you work your cross-stitch in the firelight. And then we shall go to bed, our bed, my dearest girl."

When asked if there was any "disconnect" about her portrayal of that relationship and the social conservative opposition to gay rights, Cheney said, "It's a novel. You're putting too much weight on it."

THE ADVENTURES OF SISSY VAN DYKE

EPISODE 1: It's Not Just a Name. It's a Lifestyle

Hey, the name's Sissy, Sissy Van Dyke. It's not just a name, it's a lifestyle. In case anyone is interested I am single. Anybody interested? Just checking. I never pass up a perfectly good dating opportunity, since I am what you'd call, polyamorous. And, no, that doesn't mean I'm in love with some girl named Polly! Poly meaning many, amor meaning love. When you break it down you come up with 'The Many Loves of Sissy Van Dyke.' And that's basically what this series is going to be about.

But first, to tell you a little bit about me: I'm an African-American chick, 24, devilishly cute, with a bitchin' bod and a great sense of humor. Yeah, and I'm humble as heck, too. I was born and raised in Oakland, California, and managed to transplant myself all the way across the bay to San Francisco, where I live in a converted gas station in Noe Valley. It may sound strange, but how many gals do you know with a hydraulic lift and grease pit in their bedrooms? I mean, the romantic possibilities are endless! Professionally, I'm a musician and the lead singer/guitarist for my band, Sissy and the Van Dykes. The band is partly named after me, and partly after the fact that we drive to our gigs in this funky old van. When you put the emphasis on the words 'Funky' and 'Old' you know that I'd better be having a day job to keep the van on the road, not to mention keeping yours truly in clothes, food, and CDs.

So, most of the week I spend working at the Stone Birch record store over on Valencia Street. Back in the day, it was one of the first women's music stores in San Francisco. The owners are Diamond Stone and Fawn Birch, lesbians in their 50s, who've been a couple for

over 25 years. I met them when I was still in high school, back when I was a teeny, tiny baby dyke, just starting to come out. They sold me my first Cris Williamson album, and you KNOW that's for real, cause once you learn that "Waterfall" song by heart, there's no turning back.

I started working for Stone Birch soon after I graduated from UC Santa Barbara, which my father, Navy Captain Cecil Van Dyke, affectionately calls that hippy college you went to instead of Annapolis. If you think he was pleased by my choice of schools, you can just imagine his joy when I told him I was majoring in African-American History and Women's Studies. Captain Dad: 'Why the hell should I pay \$10,000 a year for a couple of subjects you could study in a strong light in front of a mirror?' Mrs. Captain Mom: 'Here's the check, Dear. Have fun!' As you can see, Mom, Laura Peterson Van Dyke, out-ranks my dad by at least 10K.

Now, that's enough background for the time being, so let's get moving right along to my exciting romantic adventures. Luckily you ran into me today because it's a Friday, and my favorite dance club, Club Grrrrl is going on tonight. All the happening babes in the Bay Area make the scene at Club Grrrrl, and while I usually go there alone, I very rarely leave that way. I'm just about to hop into the shower and get dressed, but, unfortunately, we don't have time to get there this episode. Hey, but don't worry, I won't leave the house without you. See you soon! Love, Sissy

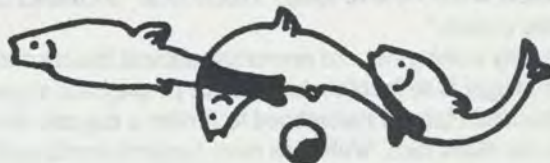
Life's Reflections

"I've always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific."

National Women's Music Festival

Mark your calendars now for June 21-24, 2001 for an exciting National Women's Music Festival in Muncie, IN. A few of the performers include Holly Near and Chris Williamson performing together, Vicki Shaw, Heather Bishop, Dance Project, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Voice of Africa and the NWMF Chorus including some of the performers. Jamie Anderson will be the emcee for the Main Stage. WOW!! There is a discount for early registration, so if you didn't get a card, check out NWMF web site - www.nwmf.org

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Every few years Lover and I empty the mug shelf. If we didn't we'd have no choice but to eat spaghetti or fried eggs from the big blue mugs with whale and dolphin motifs. There would be no room for dishes.

I didn't, by the way, bring the sea mammal mugs into this household. Lover was reminiscing with our lesbian neighbor about buying them at a time when both lived in Portland, Oregon. When Lover remembered yet another friend who shares that background and those mugs, they concluded that most lesbians from that part of the world and from that era probably still own those two mugs.

We dubbed this phenomenon *The Mug Generation*. But is it merely a generation or has it now been a half-century? I feel ancient when I realize that I can recall how momentous my first mugs were. My aunt sent them when I was in my late teens. They were red with a pleasingly geometric pattern in white and black. There was something very contemporary, almost avant garde, about both the design and the concept.

I was raised with tea cups. My mother still drinks out of those delicate pieces from her floral pattern chinaware. She also has a host of other cups in her hutch. Lover has her grandmother's collection of tea cups, each prettier than the last, but that's the point – they're collectibles now. We got rid of the cups and saucers that came with our dishes because we never used those dainty things. And they took up space, space we needed for the eminently more useful icons of our lifestyle – mugs.

Currently cluttering the mug cabinet are several cute-pet mugs, two *Far Side* cartoon mugs (the one that reads "Pants first – then shoes," being my favorite), a "DELETE" espresso mug, four stylized florals, one fruit still life, a guaranteed spill-proof stainless steel and the Sandra Boynton Happy Birthday mug which I've used every morning for over ten years. Then there's the treasure I've, reverently, never used: "Keeper of the Family Tales."

I can't say I have no regrets about letting go of oceans of mugs from my past. They were a guided tour of every festival, place, political event, lifestyle celebration and girlfriend I wanted to remember forever. I've also ditched a lovely set of English mugs in pastel colors, the *Peanuts* mug with Sally and Peppermint Patty entranced by the night heavens, more red mugs than I can count and any number of unattractive brown earthenware pieces that ruined the taste of tea.

I've had heart-breaking moments when I've dropped, bumped, destroyed in transit or lost mugs as meaningful as the events they commemorated. The little things take on lives of their own as they link me to people and events that shaped me. Thirty years later I still have two C.P.O. mugs from the Marine Specialty Shop on Commercial Street in Provincetown. Those things are indestructible, if only because they're too small to use for a decent cuppa, yet I can't part with the memories they evoke of vacations in the premiere gay resort town.

Then there are all the mugs I wish I owned:

Crunchy Granola Butch, Hothead Paison Fan Club, YEP, Ex-Girlfriend, Bathroom Line Veteran Greenwich Village 1960, I Love Midwestern Femmes, and a *Dykes to Watch Out For* "Mo" Mug.

Mugs are less formal, sometimes to the point of irreverence, than the coffee and tea cups of yore. They're also larger – to reflect these years of plenty. They suit the boomers, the gen x-ers, and whatever came next. They've allowed us to personalize a household object the way bumper stickers personalize our cars. Of course, it's a little discouraging to think that personalization can be done en masse – there are probably millions of *Garfield* "I'm Not A Morning Person" mugs out there.

Still, there's nothing wrong with having common experiences. A *Car Talk* mug is only meaningful because other people with whom we come in contact appreciate it. A mug is more than an object when it's a silent humorous exchange at the office, or a work of art that elicits admiration when company stops by, or a cheering boost when I grope for it in the cabinet before work. (I am not a morning person either.)

Mugs have followed me from relationship to relationship, from home to home. They connect me to my past and will be with me in my future. They're still a little gimmicky to be entirely respectable, but probably that's reflective of the era. When gay couples, surely as avant garde as couples get, "register" for wedding gifts, I can't imagine that they'd chose a shop that didn't carry a fine selection of pre-packaged lavender hers and hers – and his and his – mugs.




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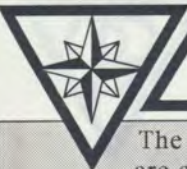
Saturday Feb. 17 – Women of Color Night C.C. Carter and friends perform *Say Jesus and Come To Me*, Revival of the novel written by C.C. Carter.

Saturday, Mar. 24 – Ubaka Hill returns for a weekend of drumming workshops and a major concert on Sat. night featuring the DrumSong Orchestra. For more info or to sign up for workshops, contact ToniAJr@aol.com or 773-769-9009

SERVICES OFFERED

Computer Sales & Services..... (219) 246-0029
 \$\$\$ in Real Estate Investing..... (219) 291-2342 or 291-2482
 Welding Repairs & Fabrication-Zealla Flores.. (219) 233-7436
 Safe At Home Pet Sitters.. (219) 243-0478
 Wills, Contracts, Powers of Attorney..... (219) 243-0478

We would be happy to add your service and telephone number to this column for free – just send the information to Open Arms.



Gay Michiana Directory

The *Gay Michiana Directory* is a courtesy service provided by *Michiana's Rainbow Gazette*. All listings are either GLBT owned and operated, or GLBT friendly. Please submit additions, errors and omissions to: MRG Directory, 222 West Battell Street, Mishawaka, IN 46545-6139, Attn: G. James

Bars/Clubs/Taverns

Helen's

4960 West US Hwy. 20
Michigan City, IN 46360
(219) 874-1100

Jeannie's Tavern

Ford St. @ Bendix Ave.
South Bend, IN
(219) 288-2962

Seahorse Cabaret II

1902 Western Ave.
South Bend, IN
(219) 237-9139

Starz

Kendall Ave.
South Bend, IN
(219) 288-7827

Truman's Night Club

100 North Center
Mishawaka, IN
(219) 259-2282
www.trumans.com

Community Service

Justice, Inc. (IN)

P.O. Box 2387
Indianapolis, IN 46206
(317) 634-9212

Hate Crimes Hotline

(800) 886-GAYS
hatecrime@justiceinc.org
www.justiceinc.org

Human Rights Commission

227 W. Jefferson St.
County-City Bldg., 14th Floor
South Bend, IN 46601
(219) 235-9409

Pride At Work, AFL-CIO

Josh Cazares, Co-President
PO Box 1966
Bloomington, IN 47402
(812) 333-2977

Pride Coalition

South Bend, IN
(219) 289-7725

Triangle Foundation (MI)

(313) 537-3323
Hate Crimes Hotline
(877) 7-TRIANGLE
http://tri.org

HIV/AIDS

AIDS Ministries/AIDS Assist

Care Coordination/Test Site
P.O. Box 11582
South Bend, IN 46634
(219) 234-2870 – South Bend
(219) 293-9743 – Elkhart

AIDS Task Force of St. Joseph Co.

Care Management/Test Site
P.O. Box 344
South Bend, IN 46624
(219) 288-0370

Aliveness Project

Care Coordination/Test Site
301 East 8th Street
Michigan City, IN 46360
(219) 882-2453

Berrien Co. AIDS Coalition

P.O. Box 8822
Benton Harbor, MI 49023
(616) 927-2437
(800) 663-2437 (MI only)

Elkhart Co. C.A.G.

608 Oakland Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516
(219) 523-2283

Planned Parenthood

201 South Chapin Street
South Bend, IN 46601
(219) 289-7062

St. Joseph County Health Department

Test Site
227 W. Jefferson St.
County-City Bldg., 9th Floor
South Bend, IN 46601
(219) 235-9781

Religion/Churches

Central United Methodist Church

1920 South Michigan Street
South Bend, IN 46614
(219) 289-7725

New Life Community Church of Hope

113 Skwiat Legion Avenue
Michigan City, IN 46360
(219) 871-1033
(219) 778-9332
nulifecc@aol.com

Southside Christian Church

1329 East Jackson Road
South Bend, IN 46615
(219) 291-1156
mlcarroll@juno.com

Support/Social Groups

Excalibur of Michiana

Michiana's Premier Leather/Levi Group
P.O. Box 1753
South Bend, IN 46635

Lesbian Support Group

P.O. Box 1612
Mishawaka, IN 46544

Open Arms

A Newsletter Dedicated To The Needs of The Lesbian Community
P.O. Box 845
Mishawaka, IN 46546

PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

South Bend/Michiana

P.O. Box 4195
South Bend, IN 46634
(219) 277-2684

Michigan City/Indiana Dunes

1602 Hidden Hills Trail
Long Beach, IN 46360-1436
Phone: 219-878-9790
Evening: 219-874-8695
Call Bill or Barbara for meeting times and locations

St. Joseph/Berrien County

c/o BUUF
4340 Lincoln Ave.
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: 616-429-2957
Email: fwood@prodigy.net

Sunday Bunch

Social Group For The GLBT Community
P.O. Box 163
South Bend, IN 46624
prhoch@michiana.org

U.G.L.Y. of Michiana

(United Gay & Lesbian Youths)
A Support Group For The GLBT Community Under The Age of 20
P.O. Box 11582
South Bend, IN 46634
Attn: Doug
(219) 235-9396
www.uglymich.org



COMMUNITY EVENTS

February 2001

Friday, Feb. 2nd & 16th

Lesbian Support Group Meeting starting at 7 pm. The Lesbian Support Group meets on the first and third Friday of each month. *For more info. please direct correspondences to the address located in the Gay Directory or e-mail Open Arms at openarms@planetout.com and we will forward your message.*

Sunday, Feb. 11th

PFLAG St. Joseph, MI Chapter Meeting. 2 pm – 4 pm at Berrien Unitarian Universalist Fellowship church in St. Joseph, Michigan. Call (616) 429-2957 or e-mail fwood@prodigy.net for directions and more information.

Monday, Feb. 12th

National Freedom To Marry Day

Wednesday, Feb. 14th

St. Valentine's Day

Monday, Feb. 19th

President's Day

Wednesday, Feb. 21st

Names Project Meeting. 6 pm – 9 pm at the Health Services Building of Notre Dame,

Room 300. For more information and directions call John Roxy at (219) 232-6930.

Sunday, Feb. 25th

PFLAG South Bend/Michiana Chapter Meeting. 2 pm – 4 pm at *Southside Christian Church*, E. Jackson St., South Bend. Call (219) 277-2684 for more information & directions.

Wednesday, Feb. 28th

Ash Wednesday

Barnes & Noble GLBT Reading Group. Starts at 8:30 pm at Barnes & Noble on Grape Rd., Mishawaka.

Pride Coalition Meeting. 6 pm – 8 pm at Central United Methodist Church, 1920 S. Michigan St., South Bend. Call (219) 289-7725 for more information.

Gay & Lesbian AA

Mon. 7:00 PM, Double Anonymity Group (C) St. Joseph Church, 226 N. Hill St. (Down Stairs)

Wed 7:00 PM, Step Meeting (O) St. Joseph Church, 226 N. Hill St. (Down Stairs)

Sat. 7:00 PM Other Side Group (C) Holy Cross College, Student Center, SW Back

Parking Lot Entrance
(Open Speaker, 1st. Sat./ Mo.)

Notations: (C) = closed mtg.; (O) = open mtg.; all meetings nonsmoking
Call 234-7007 for additional Information.
<http://www.michianasober.org>

Pride Bowl

Fridays at 7 pm at Chippewa Bowling on the corner of Chippewa Ave. and S. Main St. Call (219) 246-1930 for more information.

If you have a meeting or event you would like listed in future editions of Michiana's Rainbow Gazette please contact us by the 10th of the preceding month at:

MRG Community Events

222 W. Battell St.

Mishawaka, IN 46545

Attn: Glenn James

Or send an e-mail to

mrgsb@gay.com.

Court of Friends – Michiana's Rainbow Gazette is now accepting personal classified ads. Court of Friends was originally started by Open Arms as a means for people to make new friends with common interest. Placing an ad will be free of charge; however replying will cost \$2 per reply. More information will be provided in the March issue of MRG, but for the time being all ads submitted will be assigned a personal box number which person wishing to reply can use to reference your ad. This way you can remain anonymous. So, send those ads in to MRG/Court of Friends, 222 W. Battell St., Mishawaka, Indiana, 46545-6139. Please include your name, current mailing address, and telephone number in case we have any questions (names, addresses & telephone numbers will not be published). And please, keep it clean.

**Support The Advertisers Who Support Us...
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REMINDER

Deadline for advertisement and articles is the 10th of the preceding month. For information about advertising with Michiana's Rainbow Gazette please call Glenn at (219) 256-1794 or e-mail us at mrgsb@gay.com

Advertisement Rate

Effective to Dec. 31, 2001

Ad Size	1 Issue	5 Issues	10 Issues
Full Page	\$75.00	\$71.25	\$67.50
Half Page	\$45.00	\$42.75	\$40.50
Quarter Page	\$35.00	\$33.25	\$31.50
Banner	\$30.00	\$28.50	\$27.00
Business Card	\$20.00	\$19.00	\$18.00
Irregular	\$2.20/sq. in.	\$2.09/sq. in.	\$1.98/sq. in.



PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

PFLAG Reaches Milestone: 450 Affiliates *PFLAG Press Release*

Washington, DC – Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) today announced that PFLAG is now organized in 450 communities across the United States. PFLAG, the premier family voice for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) people, is also the largest grassroots GLBT organization in the country.

PFLAG was founded in 1973, and became formally established as a national organization in 1981. In 20 years, PFLAG has grown from a group of 20 chapters to a nationwide network of 450 affiliates, and is continuing to grow.

"This is an outstanding accomplishment, and wouldn't be possible without the commitment of PFLAG members themselves," said Carole Benowitz, chair of the PFLAG Regional Directors Council. "When PFLAG started, it was the only resource for parents who were struggling with their child's sexual orientation. Now many of our members are joining PFLAG and starting chapters because they want to educate their communities and advocate for equal rights. PFLAG members now include family members, friends, GLBT people, and straight allies who are joining parents to make communities open and welcoming for GLBT people and families."

The newest PFLAG chapters are from varied parts of the country, such as Muskogee, OK ; West Pasco, FL; and the 450th affiliate, Wilmington, NC.

PFLAG chapters have been well-known for support meetings and services, but they do so much more. Around the country, PFLAG

chapters are working with school administrators and educators to make schools more inclusive for GLBT students; sponsoring billboard or mass transit ad campaigns to educate the public; or advocating public officials to pass legal protections for GLBT people. The range of PFLAG activities is as varied as their locations, and this flexibility allows affiliates to engage in programs that meet their local needs.

There are three types of affiliates within the PFLAG network: representatives, chapters and state councils. A representative is a single person or family working to further

PFLAG's goals; a chapter is group of people; and a state council is a statewide organization of PFLAG chapters, representatives and members. In addition to the 450 PFLAG United States affiliates, there are PFLAG groups in Canada, England, France, Germany and Mexico.

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy. Serving more than 80,000 members and supporters, PFLAG's 450 chapters and affiliates are located in communities across the United States.

Good Idea of How To Educate The Community *Indy PFLAG News – January 2001*

Among the interesting things floating around in cyber space recently was a rather amusing report of PFLAGer Jeaneane Hill and her system for making those telemarketing calls more fun...

I now love telemarketers. I am a potter and it was a real chore to answer the phone in three rings. The phone is an opportunity. I answer eagerly and listen politely. When they get to the sales part I break in. "I have a very important question to ask you. Does the company you are promoting and the one you work for have a policy of non discrimination that includes sexual orientation?" they usually say, "Pardon me." I continue, "My son is gay and in 39 states he can be fired simply because someone thinks he is gay." They might say, "Well, I don't think we discriminate. Gays work here." I continue,

"My question is is it written in your policies. Do you have health benefits for partners?" I can also ask what state they are from to see if they live in one of the 39 states who have no protection. I even ask if I already know the answers just to see if they know the answers. Sometimes they pass me onto a supervisor so I get to tell it all again. Oh Happy Days.

PFLAG friends and others have tried it, too. This is a good "closet activism." You might not be out at work, but you can still help educate the public when you are called by a telemarketer. It is just good self practice to get your ideas firmly in your head so when you really face someone you are prepared.

The Gift *Grand Rapids PFLAG News – January 2001*

Gifts come in all sorts of different packages. In fact, sometimes we are not ever sure what we received is a gift at all. The first time I walked into a PFLAG meeting I was truly miserable. I didn't want to be there, and I certainly didn't think there was anything a "self help" group could do for me. My daughter had come out to me. I didn't even know that term. She told me she was gay, but that, I was sure, was only a phase.

That meeting was the first time I ever said aloud, "My name is David and I am here because I have a lesbian daughter." It was hard, but at the meeting nobody laughed, or looked shocked. I came a second time. This time I had questions, concerns, fears. The people at the meeting were just like me. They had not simple solutions, but only kindness in the face of my fears. I had received the gift of understanding. It took a while for me to realize it.

It took even longer to realize that Wendy had given me a gift as well.

It was an insight into who she is and passage into a community I never knew existed. I have met people I might never have known and learned lessons that would never have been mine. Nothing negative



LunaSea Productions celebrates Black History Month with comedienne

Karen Williams

Sat, February 24, 2001 • 8:00PM

Madame Walker Theater

617 Indiana Ave, Indpls, IN, General Seating

Tickets: \$22 in advance, \$24 at the door

Dance immediately following the show with DJs Karen "Lady Funk" Maynard and Sharon "Rock the House" Levels

(Bring show ticket stub to enter)

PFLAG Opposes Ashcroft Nomination PFLAG Press Release



Washington, DC – The Board of Directors of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) voted [January 15th] in formal opposition to the nomination of Senator John Ashcroft as U. S. Attorney General.

"The Attorney General is responsible for enforcing the laws of equality and civil rights in this country, and we can't trust Senator Ashcroft to do that," said Arnold Drake, M.D., PFLAG President. "He has spoken out and voted against basic civil rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, and these are the basic civil rights that he would be responsible to protect as Attorney General."

Board member Peg Gage, who is a Republican, said "You don't have to be a Democrat or a liberal to oppose Senator Ashcroft's nomination because civil rights are not partisan. President-elect Bush failed his pledge to select a cabinet that would bring people together. He has selected a candidate, who through word and deed, has a record of opposing justice and fairness. How can we support someone who torpedoed the nomination of a federal judge and besmirched the reputation of an extremely well-qualified African American Missouri Supreme Court justice in order to advance his own personal political aspirations?"

PFLAG has major concerns that, under Ashcroft's leadership, the Justice Department may fail to fully enforce Title IX, the 1972 statute that bars sex discrimination in public schools receiving federal funds. The guidelines make clear that one form of anti-gay harassment – that which creates a sexually hostile environment – is illegal.

In addition, the Justice Department is responsible for enforcing the Hate Crimes Statistics Act and the Sentencing Enhancement Act; and provides local law enhancement agencies with training on how to identify, report and respond to hate crimes based on sexual orientation. Senator Ashcroft consistently opposed hate crimes legislation.

Founder, Chairman and CEO of gfn.com Walter Schubert, who is a PFLAG Board member, said, "As a businessman, I am outraged that President-elect Bush would select someone who opposed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to defend our rights to protection in the workplace. American business has realized that it is neither right nor good business to discriminate against gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered persons. John Ashcroft doesn't seem to understand that, and it's alarming that he could be our next Attorney General."

"As a parent of a gay son, I went through a process of education and understanding about GLBT issues. Perhaps President-elect Bush should withdraw Senator Ashcroft's nomination until they both have attended some of PFLAG's support and education programs. There's no better way to learn about fairness and equality," said Drake. PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy. Serving more than 80,000 members and supporters, PFLAG's more than 445 chapters and affiliates are located in communities across the United States.

Something To Ponder...

"Come the millennium, month 12, in the home of greatest power, the village idiot will come forth to be acclaimed the leader." Nostradamus, 1561

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For More Information About
PFLAG Please Direct All
Correspondences To:

PFLAG South Bend/Michiana
P.O. Box 4195
South Bend, IN 46634

For Membership Information Please
Refer To The Back Page Of This
Publication.

To Locate A PFLAG Chapter
In Your Area Call (202) 638-
4200 Or Visit PFLAG Online
At www.pflag.org

A rose is a rose is a rose--or is it?

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith - © 2001 Gay.com Network

My mom always had the most wonderful rosebushes in the backyard of our home, filling a large flower bed with a number of different varieties. One thing I recall is the marked difference between the old-fashioned and hybrid roses.

The hybrid roses, as a general rule, had little or no scent. The one characteristic that best defined roses was lost in favor of larger, more extravagantly colored blooms.

I was reminded of this while reading an article on the plight of apple growers in the Pacific Northwest. Almost 50 years ago, these farmers set out to create the perfect Red Delicious apple. They wanted one that would be uniform in size and color--large and bright, unvarying red.

But they lost one vital thing in making this perfect apple--the taste. The very thing that makes a Red Delicious, well, delicious. Now, after all those years of tinkering, the apple industry has to take a major government bailout after facing three years of loss totaling approximately \$760 million.

What, you ask, does this have to do with being transgendered?

In the last few years, we have seen enormous strides in our understanding of the structure of life. Cloning is now possible and via zygote microinjection, we can manipulate life, creating things as fanciful as fluorescent rabbits. We've even been able to grow a human ear on the back of a lab rat.

We live in a world where the human genome has been mapped, and specific conditions have been located within it, allowing for alteration or eradication. An Icelandic scientist has now pinpointed the gene for schizophrenia, which could lead to a cure. A group of San Diego researchers are also hard at work, studying DNA sequencing as a way to wipe out chromosomal abnormalities in embryos.

This could well be a blessing, but one need only look back 100 years to see that we've traveled down a similar path before. The world of 1900 was also one of great scientific leaps, including a heightened understanding of the evolution of life via Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.

As Darwin unveiled the concept of survival of the fittest, it led many to a firm belief in eugenics, the study of hereditary improvement of the human race by controlled, selective breeding.

Many carried eugenics to an extreme. Advocates in the United States felt that our "stock" was slowly being weakened by the influx of so-called "lower races" from Europe. More than half the states introduced legislation to allow forced sterilization, and more than 60,000 Americans were sterilized because of eugenics-based laws.

Similar feelings gained popularity in Europe as well, leading up to the Third Reich's efforts to rid Germany of those who were not members of the "master race." I doubt I need to remind you that this included not only the Jewish, but also homosexual and transgendered individuals.

Transgendered people were also interested in eugenics. One person was Alan Hart, a female-to-male medical doctor who pursued surgical intervention (hysterectomy) as part of the expression of gender identity. Hart advised sterilization for anyone with "abnormal inversion." In other words, someone like Hart (who eventually underwent the procedure).

Today, eugenics is largely unheard of, having lost many of its followers when the atrocities of Nazi Germany came to light. But what beliefs may be formed in this era of glowing bunnies and rats

with ears grafted to their backs? Will scientists locate and delete the "transgender gene," making way for gender-perfect people? And in doing so, will we lose something as vital as the taste of an apple or the smell of a rose?

I spoke with Katrina Rose, an attorney and transgender legal scholar in Minnesota, who reminded me of an important idea. "Even if the genetic aspect of transgendered humanity is eliminated," she said, "we won't disappear. More and more research is showing that gender identity is, at least partially, a product of prenatal hormonal exposure, which may or may not be genetic in origin."

"Even with a total absence of gene-based transgenderism," Rose continued, "it's more than conceivable that outside influences might still cause XY fetuses to get too much estrogen and XX fetuses to get too much testosterone."

I'm afraid her words did not comfort me. I believe that there may be more at work than simple genetics. I suspect, however that many followers of eugenics did not adhere too closely to social Darwinism and I can see people today following a similar path.

A recent court case in Texas--*Littleton v. Prang*--illustrates this. The court determined that a male-to-female transsexual is, no matter what procedures are performed, legally a man. The court's decision was based on the assumption that Christie Lee Littleton's chromosomal sex was XY. But no one bothered to do a genetic test on her before the verdict was handed down: The court simply expected her to be XY.

Maybe that's where it all ends up. The court assumed Christie Lee Littleton was a man, and thus recreated her as one. This is exactly what happened to Red Delicious apples in the Pacific Northwest, or the roses in my mom's backyard. They were recreated to fit the expectations of others, and lost the very thing that made them special in the first place.

Perhaps recreating transgendered people to fit the expectations of others could make humanity as bankrupt as an apple grower in Washington.

The Bookshelf will return next month. In the meantime check out these great books...

Gay & Lesbian Top Ten Best Sellers

1. Abide with Me
2. The Married Man
3. Tipping the Velvet
4. The Kid
5. Tales of the City
6. Men Like Us
7. Mr. Right Is Out There
8. Best Lesbian Erotica
9. Love, Ellen
10. That's Mr. Faggot to You



Body Beautiful

Stressed? Try This by Susan Myers, RN, LCSW, CHTP

There are many techniques that promote the reduction of stress and create an internal atmosphere of peace and harmony. One of those techniques is called Mindfulness. Mindfulness has been practiced by Buddhists monks for more than 2500 years. Practicing mindfulness will increase your ability to focus and concentrate as well as normalizing the stress hormones that create cellular wear and tear that leave the body more vulnerable to illness.

Practicing Mindfulness

Most of us spend much of our waking hours on "automatic pilot." We're preoccupied with thinking about the past or anticipating the future as we are unaware that the moment is slipping away. Mindfulness involves keeping your attention in the present moment, without judging it as happy, sad, good or bad. It encourages living each moment – even painful ones – as fully and as mindfully as possible. Mindfulness is more than a relaxation technique; it is an attitude toward living. It is a way of calmly and consciously observing and accepting whatever is happening, moment to moment.

This may sound simple but our restless, judging minds make it surprisingly difficult. As a restless monkey jumps from branch to branch, our mind jumps from thought to thought. I often say, "Our minds have a mind of its own!" In mindfulness meditation, you focus the mind on the present moment. This 2500 year old Buddhist meditation tradition is thoroughly modern and relevant to our present day lives. You don't have to be a Buddhist to practice it. Mindfulness doesn't conflict with any beliefs or tradition, either religious or scientific.

The only moment we really have is this one. And living this moment as fully aware as possible is what mindfulness practice is about. It nurtures an inner balance of mind that enables you to respond to all life situations with greater composure, clarity, and compassion. It reduces our tendency to react automatically to any circumstances.

The goal of mindfulness is simply to observe – with no intention of changing or improving anything. But people are positively changed by the practice. Observing and accepting life just as it is, with all its pleasures, pains, frustrations, disappointments, and insecurities, often enables you to become calmer, more confident, and better able to cope with whatever comes along. To develop your capacity for mindfulness, try the following exercises:

Single Focus Mindfulness

Sit comfortably on the floor or on a chair with your back, neck and head straight, but not stiff. Then:

- ♦ Concentrate on a single object, such as your breathing. Focus your attention on the feeling of the air as it passes in and out of your nostrils with each breath. Don't try to control your breathing by speeding it up or slowing it down. Just observe it as it is.
- ♦ Even when you resolve to keep your attention on your breathing, your mind will quickly wander off. When this occurs, observe where your mind went then gently return your attention to your breathing.
- ♦ Use your breath as an anchor. Each time a thought or feeling arises, momentarily acknowledge it. Don't analyze it or judge it. Just observe it, and return to your breathing.

- ♦ Abandon all thought of getting somewhere, or having anything special happen. Just keep stringing moments of mindfulness together, breath by breath.
- ♦ Practice this for just five minutes at a time at first. You may wish to gradually extend the time to ten, twenty or thirty minutes. Your thoughts are like waves on the surface of the ocean. Don't try to stop the waves completely so that the water is flat, peaceful, and still – that's next to impossible. You will find relief from constant turbulence when you learn to observe and ride the waves.

Mindfulness In Daily Living

Because the practice of mindfulness is simply the practice of moment – to – moment awareness, you can apply it to anything: eating, showering, working, talking, running errands, or playing with your children. Mindfulness takes no extra time. All that is required is that you take yourself off "auto pilot," and stay tuned. Are you fully aware of your experience at this moment?

This is not as simple as it sounds. For example, think about your last meal. Do you remember what you ate? Did you pay attention to the taste sensations? Or was your mind elsewhere: engaged in thoughts, conversation, planning, and plotting, and nearly everything else but the experience of eating?

Try observing what you are about to eat.

- ♦ How does it look?
- ♦ Where does it come from?
- ♦ How do you feel about putting his particular food into your body?
- ♦ Feel the food in your mouth.
- ♦ Chew slowly. Focus on taste and texture.
- ♦ Notice the impulse to rush through this mouthful to get to the next. Stay present with the mouthful you already have.
- ♦ Before swallowing, be aware of you intention to swallow. Then feel the actual sensation of swallowing and try to follow this all the way to your stomach. (Practicing mindfulness when you're eating will reduce symptoms of indigestion!)

Continue with each mouthful in the same way, noting how fast and how much you eat, how your body feels, and whether you are eating in response to hunger, other events in your life, or a feeling such as anxiety or depression.

Another way to practice mindfulness is to observe walking. Focus on the sensations in your legs and feet. Notice how your weight shifts from foot to foot. Feel the pressure on the balls of your feet. How do your knees feel as they bend: is the ground hard or soft? When other thoughts arise, note them and bring your focus back to the moment.

Practicing mindfulness can be done at any time and with any activity. It teaches you to savor every moment and to be centered within your own spirit. Being centered gives you more control over events in your life, both internal and external. Make a commitment to practice this technique for a month, keep a journal account of your feelings, sensations, thoughts, struggles, successes and notice how much more awareness you develop over time! Notice also, how much more at peace you have become!

Kabat-Zinn, John: Wherever you go there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life. New York: Hyperion, 1994.



National Headlines

Three senators announce opposition to Ashcroft 1/01 © 2001 www.advocate.com

Three more senators have announced that they will vote against former senator John Ashcroft as U.S. attorney general when his name is placed before them. Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California and Minnesota senators Paul Wellstone and Mark Dayton say they believe Ashcroft's record, which includes strong opposition to gay rights, disqualifies him to be attorney general. Feinstein announced her opposition to Ashcroft Wednesday at a meeting of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The panel voted to postpone for a week a vote on Ashcroft's nomination while he answers more than 200 questions submitted to him from committee members. Feinstein said that Ashcroft has an "ultra right-wing" record on civil rights and seems unlikely to change his position despite reassurances to the committee that he would enforce existing laws. "So the question each senator must now ask is whether this transformation is really plausible after 25 years of advocating on the other side," Feinstein said.

The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* said Wellstone told reporters Tuesday that Ashcroft has "a record of insensitivity to minority rights" and that he will vote against him. Dayton, who was sworn in as a senator only this month, said that while Ashcroft is "a man of personal probity," he has also shown "intemperate and irresponsible conduct." Both Wellstone and Dayton say they were troubled by Ashcroft's opposition to James Hormel, the gay philanthropist nominated by President Clinton in 1998 to be ambassador to Luxembourg. Ashcroft is one of a handful of conservative senators who blocked the nomination from coming to the floor of the Senate for a vote. Clinton eventually appointed Hormel while Congress was in recess, circumventing a vote. Dayton said Ashcroft opposed Hormel "solely because he is a gay man" and noted that Ashcroft had strongly opposed federal hate-crimes legislation to protect gays and lesbians. "His public record indicates that his Justice Department will not assert itself to provide fair and equal justice to every American and not just to those with whom John Ashcroft agrees," Dayton said. Despite the growing opposition in the Senate, Ashcroft is expected to be confirmed when his nomination comes before that body.

Meanwhile, other Bush cabinet nominees met with nominal opposition Wednesday. Gale Norton, the former Colorado attorney general who has been criticized by gay activists for her vigorous defense of the state's antigay Amendment 2, was approved for Interior secretary on an 18-2 vote of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Her nomination moves to the full Senate for a vote, where she is likely to be confirmed. And Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson was approved by the Senate on a unanimous 100-0 vote to be the next secretary of Health and Human Services.

Senate introduces gay-inclusive civil rights package 1/01 © 2001 www.advocate.com

The Democratic leadership of the U.S. Senate on Monday introduced a civil rights package that includes hate-crimes and employment protections for gay men and lesbians. Named the Protecting Civil Rights for All Americans Act, the bill would also initiate a study on the problem of racial profiling, provide money to beef up legal representation for low-income people, prohibit discrimination based on genetics, and increase funding for law enforcement agencies that enforce civil rights laws. "This is a landmark bill that will pave the way for the introduction of important bipartisan legislation that will protect lesbian and gay Americans from hate crimes and job discrimination," said Winnie Stachelberg, Human Rights Campaign's political director. "The Democratic leadership, particularly Sen. Tom Daschle, deserve special thanks for sending the message that gay and lesbian equality is an important priority."

ACLU files suit against CA school district 1/01 © www.advocate.com

The American Civil Liberties Union on Wednesday filed an expanded federal lawsuit against a school district in California's Central Valley, seeking to eliminate a hostile, homophobic climate and enact systematic school reform. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. district court on behalf of a former high school student and the Gay Straight Alliance Network, charges that because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, students are harassed by school administrators, teachers, and classmates. The student in the lawsuit, George Loomis, maintains that he was harassed for being gay by his Spanish teacher at his high school in Visalia and that administrators eventually forced him to leave the school rather than end the harassment. Loomis ended up in an independent study program. He is currently a student at California State University at Fresno. The suit claims the hostile environment in schools is unlawful under the U.S. Constitution and California state law and seeks systematic reforms in the Visalia Unified School District. California's statewide GSA Network—which includes a GSA club in Visalia—is also a plaintiff in the lawsuit.

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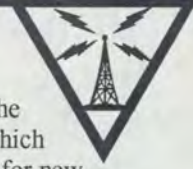
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The Inspector General of the German armed forces on January 23 issued new guidelines to instruct officers in ensuring equal treatment of gays and lesbians and women, a six-page manual of regulations entitled "How to Deal with Sexuality." The German army has undergone revolutionary changes over the last year through a series of court rulings and other decisions which have eliminated a "glass ceiling" for gays and lesbians and opened combat roles to women for the first time, creating a need for new rules. The military is also transitioning from a primarily conscripted force to a primarily professional one.

"The obligation for comradeship means tolerance for sexual practices and orientations which are not illegal and this accordingly means for [gay and lesbian] soldiers," Inspector General Harald Kujat wrote. He advised that because there is still prejudice against them, "a consciousness must be created in which the ability to carry out military tasks is not measured by the sexual orientation of the soldier." Between all military personnel, sexist remarks, provocative behavior, demands for sex, and sexually suggestive touching are now clearly prohibited. Even the classic pinup photo in the locker is banned. For those unable or unwilling to comply, Kujat recommends transfer.

Vermont's Court Ends Civil Union Battle 1/01 © 2001 www.planetout.com

The Vermont Supreme Court last week officially closed the historic "Baker" case that to the state's passage of the groundbreaking "civil union" legislation last spring. Vermont's civil unions extended about 300 state-level benefits and responsibilities of marriage to gay and lesbian couples; it went into effect July 1, 2000. The court's termination of jurisdiction indicates its satisfaction that civil unions meet the standards of the state constitution's equal benefits clause and that the court will not act to force inclusion of gays and lesbians under the existing marriage law. Vermont Senate Judiciary Chair Dick Sears (D-Bennington) said, "I would hope that would give people comfort. I think it ratifies the protections for marriage we put in the law."

Nonetheless state Representative Nancy Sheltra (R-Derby), an outspoken opponent of civil unions from the beginning who organized a group specifically to oust supporters of the new legal relationship in the November elections, introduced a bill to repeal the law on January 18, according to the Associated Press. Sheltra's measure, co-sponsored by sixteen other Republican Representatives, is known as "The Marriage Restoration Act" and declares that, "A civil union or reciprocal beneficiaries relationship established pursuant to the act shall be void." More than 1,500 civil unions have been performed, nearly four-fifths for couples from out of state. "Reciprocal beneficiaries" are a much weaker and more easily dissolved legal relationship created under the civil unions law to grant some benefits to other kinds of cohabiting couples who cannot marry (such as blood relations), but no couple to date has taken advantage of the opportunity. Repeal has essentially no chance of success since Democrats still control the state Senate. Sheltra's bill will be assigned to the House Judiciary Committee, which is anticipating a handful of other bills to repeal or amend the civil unions law. That committee on January 16 held the first of what are planned to be meetings every Tuesday of the legislative session to consider civil unions.

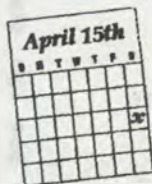
The civil union legislation sprang out of a December, 1999 ruling of the Vermont Supreme Court. In its landmark decision, the court determined that same-gender couples could be denied the full range of benefits available through marriage as it would violate the equal protection clause of the state's constitution. The ruling essentially tied the hands of legislators, requiring them to either allow same-sex marriage or create a parallel institution, such as civil unions.

WA State court to consider property rights for gay couples © 2001 www.planetout.com

The Washington State supreme court will hear a lawsuit next month involving a man whose partner of 30 years died without a will, the *Seattle Times* reports. At issue in the case is whether a state law ruling that people who have lived together for a long time but never married have property rights can be applied to gay couples. Robert Schwerzler and Frank Vasquez lived and worked together for nearly 30 years, running a burlap-bag recycling business out of their Puyallup home. Schwerzler died without a will in 1995 at the age of 78. His entire estate, was valued at \$230,000 and included the home he and Vasquez shared, two cars, furniture, and an annuity, all of which were in his name. Schwerzler's brother and two sisters maintain that they have the rights to the property. Schwerzler's family disputes that their brother and

Vasquez were a gay couple, noting that Schwerzler was married three times. However, Terry Barnett, Vasquez's attorney, says that the couple, although private about their relationship, "everything they did, they did together." Vasquez, 67, has received support from the American Civil Liberties Union, the Northwest Women's Law Center, and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, all of which have filed friend-of-the-court briefs on his behalf. "The stakes are high socially, and they're high legally," Jenny Pizer, managing attorney for Lambda, told the paper. "Courts recognize that lots of heterosexuals don't get married, and legal problems arise as a result, and courts try to help them. Courts need to be open and help unmarried gay and lesbian couples the same way." The supreme court will be the third court to consider the case. In 1997 a trial judge awarded Vasquez ownership of all joint property, but last February a state appeals court overturned the decision, saying that state law does not recognize gay relationships. The state supreme court will hear oral arguments in the case on February 13.

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Our Mission...

Michiana's Rainbow Gazette exist as a media source to disseminate news and educational information in a diverse and unbiased manner to help promote the improvement of the overall welfare of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and heterosexual community in Michiana and all surrounding areas.

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